



Highway 101 Improvements Milpas to Hot Springs/Cabrillo

Project Summary

Since 1994 Caltrans has been working with the City of Santa Barbara, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), and the County of Santa Barbara to improve safety, relieve congestion, and provide additional access for bicycles and pedestrians on Highway 101 and local roads along the corridor between the Milpas and Hot Springs/Cabrillo interchanges.

Increasing 101 Congestion

Traffic volumes on Highway 101 have increased significantly in the past 10 years. The number of vehicles using Highway 101 each day from Milpas to Hot Springs/Cabrillo has grown from 79,000 vehicles in 1990 to 95,000 in 2000, a growth of over 20 percent. By 2025 the number of vehicles using 101 each day is expected to climb to 107,000. As congestion on the highway rises, traffic often diverts to the surrounding streets as an alternative.

Identified Deficiencies

Several needs have been identified from Milpas to Hot Springs/Cabrillo:

Southbound 101

- Traffic congestion during evening and weekend peak hours

Northbound 101

- Traffic congestion during morning peak hours

Milpas Interchange

- Narrowing of 101 southbound from three lanes to two lanes at Milpas
- Backup of traffic on the southbound offramp
- Congestion caused by vehicles merging with 101 traffic at the southbound on ramp
- Lack of Access from Eastside Community to Waterfront Area

Hot Springs/Cabrillo Interchange

- Congestion caused by vehicles merging with 101 traffic at the northbound on ramp
- Short merging distance at the southbound onramp
- Non-standard left side (median) ramps
- Congestion at intersection of Cabrillo and median 101 ramps
- Limited pedestrian and bicycle access
- Low vertical clearance and sharp curve at Los Patos off ramp
- Congestion at Coast Village Road/Hot Springs/Cabrillo Intersection



What is the Project Purpose?

Given the needs and deficiencies described above, several objectives have been established for the project:

- Relieve congestion on Highway 101
- Reduce collisions and merging conflicts on 101 at on ramps and off ramps
- Modify interchanges to improve operations, reduce congestion and improve access to and from 101
- Improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians from the Lower Eastside and Coast Village Road areas to the waterfront area
- Improve 101 to limit diversion of traffic to local streets
- Improve local roads in corridor to provide alternative routes for local trips

What Improvements are Being Considered?

Four alternatives have been developed to improve Highway 101 and the local streets from Milpas to Hot Springs/Cabrillo (A, B, C, and D). Alternative A is the 'no-build' or 'no-project'.

Alternatives B through D all share the following features:

- Add a third southbound lane from Milpas to Hot Springs/Cabrillo. This would require replacing the southbound 101 bridge at Milpas, and replace the Sycamore Creek Bridge.
- Add a southbound loop off ramp for vehicles traveling north on Milpas. The existing southbound off ramp to Milpas would be modified to allow right turns only, and the signal removed to improve traffic circulation.
- Add the new Cacique Street Undercrossing to provide new pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle access between Milpas and Alisos.
- Add a new pedestrian tunnel under the railroad and bicycle lanes and walkway though the Cabrillo Interchange. The pedestrian tunnel would allow continuation of the separated (Class I) walkway and bikepath in addition to striped bike lanes adjacent to traffic (Class II) on Cabrillo.
- Improve the intersection of Cabrillo and Hot Springs/Coast Village/Old Coast Highway with either a signal or roundabout.

Alternative B

The following are exclusive to Alternative B:

- Add a northbound acceleration lane to the Cabrillo on ramp to provide additional merging room.
- Close the southbound Cabrillo on ramp. This would improve circulation on 101 and at the Cabrillo/101 median ramp intersection with one less turning movement.



Alternative C

The following are included in Alternative C:

- Add a northbound auxiliary lane (weaving lane) between Cabrillo on ramp and Salinas off ramp. This would improve circulation and safety on 101 by reducing merging conflicts.
- Close the Los Patos off ramp. Widen the Cabrillo southbound off ramp in the median to two lanes to allow for the diverted traffic from the closed Los Patos off ramp. A signal would be needed at Cabrillo/101 median ramp intersection to maintain circulation.
- Add a southbound acceleration lane to the Cabrillo on ramp to provide additional merging room.

Alternative D

- Add a northbound auxiliary lane (weaving lane) from the Salinas on ramp to Milpas off ramp, in addition to the auxiliary lane from Cabrillo to Salinas (also included in Alternative C).
- Relocate the Cabrillo southbound left (median) on and off ramps to provide typical right hand on and off ramps (half diamond). Close the Los Patos off ramp. The new ramp configuration would allow for the diverted traffic from the closed Los Patos off ramp. A signal would be added to the Cabrillo/new ramp intersection to improve traffic flow.
- Close the Cabrillo northbound off ramp in the median and extend the Hermosillo northbound off ramp to allow for the diverted traffic from the closed median off ramp. A signal would be needed at Coast Village Road/101 offramp intersection.

How much does the project cost?

Current estimates for construction range from \$33 million for Alternate B and C to almost \$40 million for Alternative D. Only \$26.3 million of the total project is funded. Funds are allocated from local Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), and there is no funding from Measure D.

How many businesses and residents will be affected?

A total of seven properties will be impacted by the project as currently proposed:

- New Cacique Undercrossing - two apartments
- Replacement of Sycamore Creek - one mobilehome
- New southbound loop off ramp to Milpas - one residence, one residence/business, and two additional businesses

How many trees are planned to be removed?

Alternatives B and C propose an equal removal of trees at 33. Alternative D has the potential for the greatest tree removal at 64, as it includes replacing the southbound Cabrillo Interchange.



Summary of Alternatives

The table below indicates the project feature associated with each build alternative. Although the project improvements are grouped as alternatives, many of the components could be combined in a different manner to create a new alternative. The Early Construction in the table below indicates which project components could be constructed earlier in the process than 2005 if selected.

ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTION

Project Feature	Alternatives			Early Const
	B	C	D	
Add third southbound lane from Milpas to Cabrillo. This would require replacing the southbound 101 bridge at Milpas, and replacing the Sycamore Creek Bridge.	X	X	X	
Add southbound loop off ramp to Milpas	X	X	X	
New Cacique Street undercrossing	X	X	X	
New Pedestrian Tunnel under railroad and bicycle lanes and walkway through Cabrillo Interchange.	X	X	X	
Improved intersection of Cabrillo Blvd with Hot Springs/Coast Village/Old Coast Highway – Signal or Roundabout	X	X	X	X
Cabrillo northbound on ramp acceleration lane	X			
Close the Cabrillo southbound on ramp	X			
Northbound auxiliary lane (weaving lane) between Cabrillo on ramp and Salinas off ramp		X	X	
Close the Los Patos Way off ramp. Widen the Cabrillo southbound off ramp to two lanes		X		X
Cabrillo southbound on ramp acceleration lane		X		X
Northbound auxiliary lane (weaving lane) from Salinas on ramp to the Milpas off ramp			X	
Relocate the Cabrillo southbound on and off ramps and replace Cabrillo interchange. Close the Los Patos off ramp.		X	X	
Close the northbound Cabrillo Blvd off ramp. Extend the Hermosillo Drive northbound off ramp. Signal at Coast Village Road/101 intersection.			X	
Soundwalls (SW) Recommended				
Replace existing northbound 101 SW - Salinas Street to Punta Gorda Street	X	X	X	
New northbound 101 SW – Punta Gorda Street to Milpas Street	X	X	X	
New northbound 101 SW – near the municipal tennis courts	X	X	X	
New southbound SW - off the highway right of way near the Santa Barbara Zoo	X	X	X	



What happened to the original six-lane widening project?

In the early 1990's about \$70 million had been programmed for a project to widen 101 to a six-lane freeway from Milpas Street in Santa Barbara to the Ventura County Line. In 1993, the draft environmental document (EIR/EIS) was released with a public hearing. Due to the public opposition over the potential loss of landscaping, historic structures and residential homes, the project was halted and funding reallocated. In 1996, \$50 million was set aside for several operational improvements from Carpinteria to Santa Barbara, including the Milpas to Hot Springs project.

How is this different than the original widening proposal?

The original six-lane project was proposed with limited public involvement and only considered improvements along 101. The Highway 101 Improvement from Milpas to Hot Springs/Cabrillo was developed with considerable involvement by the public and local agencies to provide alternatives that serve both local and regional needs and are sensitive to community priorities. The Milpas to Hot Springs project has been designed to ensure that widening of 101 to six lanes in the future is not precluded.

How were local agencies and the public involved?

In 1994, SBCAG commissioned a consultant to investigate alternatives to avoid highway widening before the year 2015 (Parsons Brinckerhoff Alternatives Analysis of Highway 101 Corridor, May 1995). The Highway 101 Corridor Task Force formed out of the analysis with representatives from the City of Carpinteria, County of Santa Barbara, City of Santa Barbara, County Board of Supervisors, SBCAG, the public, and Caltrans to develop and prioritize a list of operational improvements (Consensus Recommendations). The Milpas to Hot Springs project is one of several projects recommended by the 101 Task Force and approved by SBCAG.

How were the four alternatives for this project selected?

At the initiation of the this project in 1997, a Multi-Agency Team formed to evaluate all of the proposals by the Highway 101 Corridor Task Force within the Santa Barbara City limits. The Multi-Agency Team included representatives from City of Santa Barbara, Architectural Board of Review (ABR), Planning Commission, Historic Landmark Committee (HLC), County of Santa Barbara, City Council, SBCAG, the public, and Caltrans. From June of 1997 to June of 2000, the Multi-Agency Team identified the project needs and developed the four alternatives studied for this draft EIR.

How will the preferred alternative be selected?

After receiving the communities' feedback on the project during the public comment time, the City of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, and Caltrans, with input from the County of Santa Barbara, will select the preferred project alternative that will be implemented.



Will public involvement be allowed after the Final EIR?

The EIR process will define the major components of the project to continue. The details of the project, including landscaping and architectural elements, will be developed during the final design and concurrent Coastal Development Process. Opportunities will be available for public input on the details during reviews by the Historic Landmarks Committee, Architectural Board of Review, and the Planning Commission.

When will the project be completed?

After the Final EIR is completed almost 2 and ½ years are needed to design, bid, and award the construction contract (currently targeted for fall of 2005). The major time consuming processes are railroad/right of way acquisition, utility relocation, and structures design. Construction could take up to 4 years, and be completed in 2009. The timeline below indicates the major project milestones.

June 1997 to June 2000	Multi-Agency Team developed project alternatives
March 2000	Began preliminary design and environmental studies
July 17, 2000	Public scoping meeting
July 2000 to May 2001	Completed environmental studies and prepared draft EIR
May 2001 to April 2002	Review and revision of administrative draft of EIR
April to October 2002	Review by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Oct 15, 2002 to Jan 15, 2003	Public comment time/community meetings on draft EIR
Jan 2003 to March 2003	Selection of preferred alternative
April 2003	Final EIR and begin detailed design
March 2005 to September 2005	Completion of design, contract preparation, award of contract
September 2005	Begin project construction
September 2009	Completion of construction

How can I provide input or find out more information?

From October 15 to January 15, 2003, Caltrans is seeking citizen input on the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and project alternatives through a series of public workshops, website, and toll free hotline. The public's opinion is essential to developing the project that will best meet the needs of the community.

For further information please contact Brandy Rider at (866) 484-8235, by email at simprove@dot.ca.gov, or in writing to Larry Newland, Caltrans, 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, Ca 93401-5415.